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ON A POLYCLITAN HEAD IN BOSTON

[PLATE VI]

THE unreliability of photographs as a basis for the study of works of sculpture is well illustrated in the case of a marble head of a youth in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which has recently been published by Dr. Sieveking (*Jb. Arch. I.* XXIV, 1909, pp. 1 ff., pls. I, II) and briefly discussed by M. Salomon Reinach in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, March, 1911, p. 251. Dr. Sieveking in a foot-note gives his reason for reproducing photographs of a cast of the head rather than of the original as follows: "eine Wiedergabe nach dem Original war leider unmöglich weil dieses in ganz falscher Haltung auf dem Sockel sitzt und daher sehr ungünstig wirkt."

This statement must have caused some surprise to those admirers of the head to whom its installation in the Museum in Boston seemed particularly successful. On the original statue the head was inclined forward and to the left, with a somewhat lowered gaze,¹ an attitude which could best be appreciated when the fragment was placed on a shelf some seven feet above the ground. Dr. Sieveking's criticism, however, applies very well to the photograph at his disposal, which shows the head with the same forward inclination, but much foreshortened because it had been placed at the level of the camera. Unfortunately the three-quarter front view made from a cast which he publishes (*l.c.* pl. I), is almost equally unsatisfactory. It has led M. Reinach, and not without apparent cause, to doubt the connection of the head with Polyclitus and to recognize in it rather several features of the style of Cresilas.

The true character of the head can be better appreciated in the new photograph from the original reproduced herewith

¹ Cf. Sieveking, *l.c.* p. 1.

(PLATE VI). "The very oval contour of the head," "the modelling of the eyelids *à arêtes vives*," "the large mouth," "the relatively small chin"; in short, most of the points of resemblance to the works of Cresilas noted by M. Reinach have vanished. The Polyclitan characteristics, on the other hand, are so striking that it would be superfluous to enumerate them. The photograph even helps to explain the former inclusion of the head among the replicas of the Doryphorus.¹ It differs from the latter, however, as has been remarked above, in the forward inclination and the direction of the gaze. The eyes as a result are less widely open, with more drooping upper lids. In these respects the head forms a transition between the Doryphorus and the Diadumenus.² The same statement applies to the treatment of the hair. In its general design and in the carving of the locks in detail it closely resembles that of the Doryphorus. But it forms a thicker mass over the skull, and the separate locks are more plastically rendered, thus showing an advance towards the still freer treatment on the Diadumenus.

The identification of the original statue as a Hermes is doubted by M. Reinach. This is, however, comparatively a minor question. The very important result of Dr. Sieveking's work is his discovery that the head corresponds closely, even in the details of the hair, to several other replicas. It is thus shown to be a reliable copy of a definite statue, not a free version in which the sculptor may have introduced extraneous elements. And, as Dr. Sieveking and Mr. Robinson before him³ have stated, it is easily the best extant copy of a work by Polyclitus.

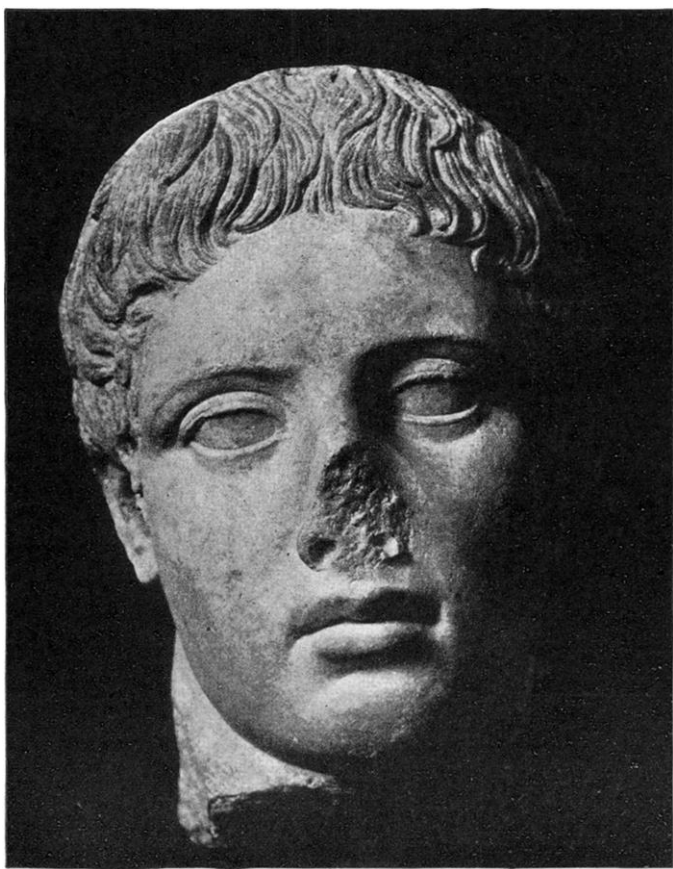
L. D. CASKEY.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS,
BOSTON.

¹ *l.c.* p. 1.

² The relation of the eyes on the three heads, expressed mathematically, is as follows: the width of the eyeball of the head in Boston including the lachrymal gland is 0.035 m., the height of the eyeball 0.013 m. The same dimensions measured on a cast of the Naples Doryphorus are 0.035 m. and 0.0145 m.; on the Vaison Diadumenus, 0.034 m. and 0.0125 m.

³ *Annual Report of the Museum of Fine Arts*, 1898, p. 20.



POLYCLITAN HEAD IN BOSTON